

Message Text

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21

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 VO-03 INSE-00 SCA-01 /057 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8756

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 18801

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP, PFOR, TH (KITTIKACHON, FIELD MARSHAL THANOM)

SUBJECT: RTG VOLTE-FACE ON THANOM'S VISIT TO THAILAND

REF: A) BANGKOK 18712; B) BANGKOK 18777

SUMMARY: SANYA CHICKENS OUT AND DECIDES NOT TO ALLOW THANOM TO VISIT HIS AILING FATHER. END SUMMARY.

1. MIXING PUSILLANIMOUS INDECISION WITH VALOROUS DISCRETION, THE RTG HAS CHANGED ITS MIND AND DENIED EX-PRIME MINISTER THANOM KITTIKACHON PERMISSION TO VISIT HIS AILING FATHER. PRIME MINISTER SANYA DID A GOOD IMITATION OF RON ZIEGLER IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE OF NOVEMBER 29 (REF B), CLAIMING THE WHOLE AFFAIR HAD ALL BEEN A TRIAL BALLOON ANYWAY.

2. IT APPEARS THAT A MOMENTARY SYMPATHY FOR THANOM'S FAMILY SITUATION CLOUDED THE TOP LEADERSHIP'S ABILITY TO REALIZE THE SIZE AND INTENSITY OF THE OPPOSITION TO THANOM'S BEING ALLOWED BACK IN THE KINGDOM, EVEN BRIEFLY. THE EXPRESSED PUBLIC OPINION AGAINST THE VISIT WAS INDEED SHARP BUT DID NOT OCCASION ANY IMMEDIATE DEMONSTRATIONS. NONETHELESS, SANYA MUST HAVE SEEN THE OUTCRY AS THE TIP OF A LARGE AND NASTY ICEBERG HEADING TOWARD THE SHIP OF STATE, WITH THE COLLISION TIMED FOR THANOM'S ARRIVAL IN COUNTRY.

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3. THOUGH THE MOMENTUM OF GATHERING ANTIPATHY TO THANOM'S

VISIT MAY CARRY ON IN AFTER-THE-FACT PETITIONS TO GOVERN-
MENT HOUSE AND THE LIKE, WE BELIEVE THAT THE ISSUE IS DEAD.
AT NO TIME DID THANOM'S RESIDENCE IN THE U.S. ENTER INTO
THE PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF HIS POSSIBLE VISIT.
MASTERS

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NNN

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